

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

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**Veterans Services Division  
BULLETIN**

DATE: December 3, 2001

**TO: VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS**

**SUBJECT: HEPATITIS C ALERT AND TESTING**

Please share this information with your members at Chapter, Posts, District meetings and Conventions, etc.

Hepatitis C (HCV) is a blood-borne virus that requires an exchange of hepatitis C contaminated blood. Hepatitis C is an inflammation of the liver caused by the hepatitis C virus. It is often a silent disease that can "hide in the body for up to 30 years without symptoms". The infected person may not feel anything is wrong, even while the disease is causing permanent liver damage.

**A FEW STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT VIETNAM VETERANS MAY BE AT A GREATER RISK FOR HEPATITIS C DEPENDING ON THEIR EXPERIENCE IN SERVICE AND OTHER EXPOSURES BEFORE AND AFTER SERVICE.**

1. In your military service, have you ever been in a situation in which you have had exposure to someone else's blood through contact with a bleeding wound, though needlestick injury, or in any other way?
2. Did you serve in Vietnam?
3. Did you have a blood transfusion or organ transplant before 1992?
4. Have you ever, EVEN ONCE, injected drugs?
5. Have you ever, EVEN ONCE, snorted or inhale cocaine using a straw or bill?
6. Have you ever had unprotected sex with multiple partners?
7. Have you ever had hemodialysis?
10. Were you born to an HCV-infected mother?
11. Have you received, before 1987, blood products for clotting problems?
12. Have you ever had an abnormal liver function test?

**"ALL AT RISK" VETERANS AS WELL AS ANY CONCERNED VETERANS SHOULD CONTACT THEIR NEAREST VA TREATMENT FACILITY FOR TESTING.**

